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CHARLOTTE, NC

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August 13, 2019

Clerk, US District Court
Western District of NC

Honorable Judge Robert J. Conrad
United States District Judge
235 Charles R. Jonas Federal Building
401 West Trade Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

Re: August 28 Sentencing of Wanda Greene, Mandy Stone, Jon Creighton, and Michael Greene

Dear Judge Conrad:

As the former Buncombe County Finance Director, I am writing to advocate for justice in the sentencing of Buncombe County officials Wanda Greene, Mandy Stone, and Jon Creighton, and Buncombe County employee Michael Greene. Because of their criminal acts, my life was turned upside down, losing a job and career I loved dearly in the process. Starting years before my tenure as Finance Director, these four were breaking laws, violating trust, and manipulating the system for their personal gain. Their wrongdoing was not from a lack of understanding, but instead willful and without remorse.

The son of Buncombe County Manager Wanda Greene, Michael Greene's time as a Buncombe employee was marked by a sense of entitlement. He was unqualified for his position and only received it because the County Commissioners allowed for this gross nepotism. When in 2009 as Internal Auditor I discovered and reported on his wrongdoing, Michael was let off where others would have been terminated and likely prosecuted. He should have learned his lesson then, but instead, unbeknownst continued to scheme and break the law, flaunting his position as Wanda's son.

As an assistant county manager, Jon Creighton's loyalty should have been to the organization and not the person. That is not the case with Jon. He was an enigma and someone difficult to work with, seeming to get whatever he wanted from "Mother" (his reference, not mine). This assistant county manager tried to thwart my investigation into Wanda Greene's use of his staff member's procurement card for inappropriate purchases. I discovered Wanda was using others' cards against County policy. Jon was told I was canceling his assistant's card. He was one of only two outside my staff who knew I was making inquiries. When he confronted me, I asked him not to inform Wanda about my actions. He tipped her off anyway, prompting a Sunday visit from Wanda to my office while I was documenting findings. Thus, began a game of cat and mouse. She returned thousands of dollars in gift cards and equipment the following morning, which forced a sooner-than-anticipated confrontation that ended with me sending the County Manager and her son home, locking both out of County buildings and systems so that potential evidence could be preserved.

County Manager Wanda Greene's crimes speak for themselves. The years of manipulation. The lies. The deceit. The greed. I did not see that side of her. I trusted her. Why wouldn't I? She was the respected head of the organization. She took an interest in my career; she mentored me; she did amazing things. In the end, she used me. Her interest in me merely to keep an eye on my activities, to steer me away from her misdeeds. At one point, she moved me out of the Finance Department. It was a promotion, she

said. It was to advance my career, she said. No, it was to advance her cause. She knew I was an obstacle. I questioned a lot. She knew my ambitions, though. She said the experience in another department would help me get her job someday. I'm sure she relished how I fed on that and so eagerly moved. I'm also sure Wanda hated to bring me back nearly 18 months later as Finance Director when my predecessor abruptly retired putting her in a bind. I guess she thought I could be controlled.

I was honored and thrilled to be appointed by the County Commissioners as the Finance Director. There was a catch, though. I was kept at a distance. Wanda saw to that. I did not report to Wanda or the Board. Like my predecessor, I was not part of Wanda's Senior Leadership Team. Instead I reported to the Director of Budget & Administrative Services. Being the junior executive, I trusted her judgment. I trusted what she told me. I even trusted her to straighten up my new office before moving in, to later discover she shredded multiple bags of documents my predecessor left behind.

Within a few months after my appointment I started to see red flags. Things were different now in my new role. I had access not seen in previous positions. Shortly, I was rewarded with an insurance policy, a lucrative one. Several got them. At first, I was honored by this. Later, I got suspicious. Eventually, going around my direct supervisor who stopped me previously, I called Wanda out on a large payment asking for additional Board approval. She abruptly ended the program right then and there. Are we good, she asked? I was stunned but held my composure. Sure, I said knowing full well my life and career were to forever change. The red flags made sense now. The reality hit. Wanda Greene was a liar, a cheat, and a con. My investigation started in earnest then. About a week later Wanda announced her retirement. I can't help but think I forced this move. A few weeks later, I would be sending her home for other inappropriate activity, activity where I had just obtained substantial proof.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "When you strike at a king, you must kill him." I thought my strike at Wanda would suffice. I did not anticipate King Wanda being in fact a dragon, one with multiple heads.

This brings me to Mandy Stone. She is the most dangerous of all. Where I am convinced Wanda has no soul, Mandy has one, but it is full of rot. I did not suspect Mandy was a crook. I had nothing that indicated as much. My contact with her was limited until she became County Manager. Unaware at the time, I was in her crosshairs from the moment she received that appointment. It may have been fortuitous there was a three-week gap between her appointment and when she assumed the position as County Manager. That is when my initial report of Wanda's wrongdoing was taken to the authorities. Mandy nor the Commissioners were consulted prior to this event. They were advised afterwards, a point of contention for both. Having seen Michael Greene let off in 2009, I was abundantly cautious with my report, particularly sensitive that a woman's career and legacy were at stake. Although I knew Wanda was a fraud, I needed to be protective of her rights. I did not want this to become a political blood bath. I admit I was naïve.

On July 1, 2017, Mandy Stone took over as County Manager. From day one, Mandy controlled access to the Board and the media. She had a devoted team willing to do whatever necessary to advance her causes. Soon she took control of Human Resources. She wanted—and in hindsight needed—control of Finance. She needed me gone. I was a threat, likely to have incriminating information. The destruction of me and my accomplishments was a new cause for her team. Mandy was shameless in what she did. Her team scoured my personnel file for things to use against me. She berated me in a meeting among my peers for a bonus received for work on a recent AAA credit rating, neglecting to mention the one she received six times larger a few years earlier for the same thing. She called into question the validity of my employment contract, not with me but the local tv news media. I found out about it while watching her on tv. She convinced the Board I was overpaid and was behind them forcing a new contract negotiation and salary cut, while giving her top two lieutenants a combined \$80,000 pay raise. She

excluded me from closed session Board meetings, telling me no financial matters were to be discussed when in fact they were. At one such meeting, I was accused of making a \$200,000 kickback payment, which in fact never happened. She was relentless. The attacks went on and on causing me to ask her who was under investigation, me or Wanda Greene.

Mandy was masterful at perpetuating the myth I was part of a Wanda "clique," something a couple Commissioners were eager to facilitate to advance her cause. Yes, I worked with Wanda Greene. After all, I was Finance Director the last two years of her career. I even traveled with Wanda on occasion, all business-related events. Mandy and Jon were her assistant county managers for several years, meeting weekly as part of their Senior Leadership Team, lunching weekly (Wednesdays I believe), and taking many trips, now well documented as not business related. From my vantage point the true clique was Wanda, Jon, Mandy and Commissioners, a club I participated in twice monthly at Commissioner meetings. My interaction with that crowd was almost exclusive to those events. It was an incestuous crowd. I disrupted it, and I paid the price.

Mandy turned staff and commissioners alike against me. The now-indicted commissioner was chief among the Commissioners who openly berated me. It was hard to win favor with the Board because of the tension between Mandy and myself and her constant attacks on me. Her attacks were subtle yet effective. I oftentimes referred to it as her whisper campaign against me. When asked at a closed-session Board meeting if I trusted Mandy, I said no. They trusted her, they said, and I should too. Their faith in Mandy was firmly cemented. Mandy forced colleagues whom I also considered friends to choose loyalties. Most hurtful is my weekly Bridge buddy. He said he once saluted the wrong flagpole and was not going to do that again. He chose Mandy. His reward? A promotion. We don't speak anymore.

Mandy's gaslighting of me was beginning to work. I started having doubts. I felt isolated. Exhausted, beaten, abused and scorned I was given the final blow. In June 2018, there was buzz that Wanda was to be indicted for a second time. The Board and Mandy needed a scapegoat, a distraction, someone to take the blame. Blaming Wanda wasn't enough. Just days before the anticipated indictment, I was forced to resign. I considered it extortion; they threatened my livelihood and reputation in a very public manner. I caved. A lawyer to represent me would have been nice, but the one I used just months prior for my employment contract renegotiation was now suddenly working with the Commissioners. I was given less than 24 hours to decide. I couldn't win. Defeated, Mandy finally got what she wanted.

Within days of my resignation, Wanda was indeed again indicted, and word surfaced that Mandy was also under investigation. She abruptly retired. Two months later she and Jon Creighton were indicted. It all finally made sense.

For almost a year Mandy spearheaded my punishment for pulling the thread on the criminal acts of these four. I lost my job and career as a result, not because I did wrong but because I did right. I was unemployed for nearly a year afterwards, continuing to be vilified, the stress and anguish almost unbearable. I may be an extreme example of the damage done by these four, but I am not unique. There are others who have been harmed for getting in their way. I see no contrition on the part of Wanda, Mandy, Jon or Michael, only regret in getting caught, regret in not having taken me out sooner. The crimes of these four were not victimless. They held positions of public trust. They abused that trust. It is time to account. It is time for justice, and justice starts with their punishment. I ask that you punish them. Punish them hard. Make them an example.

Sincerely,

